Sustainability Plan Nutrition Education and Literacy Programs July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2007

Introduction

Sustainability is defined in the context of on-going community change by the First 5 – Placer County Children and Families Commission. In their Strategic Plan for 2004-2007 they describe their sustainability goal as: "First 5 – Placer will <u>sustain results</u> that benefit children prenatal through age five and their families, by mobilizing both social and financial capital to produce measurable, positive change for these families at the community level."

Our plan builds on the Commission's emphasis on social and financial capital and an integration of the two. Social capital development is accomplished through the strengthening of individual, family, group and institutional competencies. Where as, financial capital development is the identification, cultivation, leveraging, and sharing of resources. Integrating the development of both social and financial capital requires a systematic approach to achieving and sustaining outcomes that involves both people and funding support.

Program Outcomes

Placer County families who participate in UC Cooperative Extension services will:

Maintain healthy lifestyles (sound nutrition and exercise) resulting in healthy children.

Have improved literacy knowledge and skills, so that their children will be ready for school.

Have on-going, easy access to up-to-date information and professional expertise relating to nutrition and literacy issues independent of First 5 funding.

I. Sustaining Results: Individuals and Families

Strategies and Goals:

1. Project goals are aligned with family needs.

Rationale: When families' needs are considered and they are involved in the process and content delivery, they are more likely to participate. Results are more apt to be sustained, when they meet the needs of the learner.

2. Children and families' capacities are improved – knowledge, skills, attitudes.

Rationale: Once a skill is learned and practiced, it will continue to be used. Then children who learn these new habits can sustain them into adulthood.

3. Families are linked to other resources and agencies.

Rationale: When new practices are learned, they are more apt to be continued if families receive other support to continue with the practice.

II. Sustaining Results: Institutional and Organizational

Strategies and Goals:

1. Program development is continuous and content and delivery are researched-based.

Rationale: Continuous program feedback assures that deliveries are modified, eliminated or expanded. Relying on researched and proven strategies, deliveries and content will assure greater attainment of program outcomes and more efficient use of resources.

2. Project goals are aligned with other agency or organizational needs.

Rationale: Other agency involvement assures that project direction and content meets highest priority needs, compliments other related objectives, and eliminates duplication of effort.

3. Collaborations are established, maintained, and strengthened.

Rationale: Partnering and networking with a wide range of agencies assures better communication, more sharing of resources, improved problem-solving, and more systemic integration of results.

4. Agencies' leadership and delivery capacities are improved – knowledge, skills, attitudes.

Rationale: Strengthening and improving the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of other agencies and their personnel provides greater support for families, improves efficiency and effectiveness of deliveries, and assists in countywide achievement of results.

III. Sustaining Results: Community Integration

Strategies and Goals:

1. Nontraditional partners are included in program delivery and resource development.

Rationale: More innovative and creative approaches to problem-solving and program delivery are more likely to occur, when diverse groups are involved in the planning and delivery.

2. Community provides supportive environment for sustaining outcomes.

Rationale: "It takes a village" to improve large social issues. This requires the involvement, motivation and support of those directly and indirectly affected by the issue. It requires the involvement of all of those who contribute to the 'social culture' of the community such as: media, business, planning departments, government, religious groups, etc.

3. Successes are made known to the public.

Rationale: To sustain change, outcomes need to be collected, reported, and celebrated. Highly visible programs bring credibility and acceptance.

Progress Towards Achieving Sustainability of Nutrition Education and Literacy Programs March 2, 2005

Program Outcomes for the Project

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Progress Towards Sustainability

Considerable progress has been made over the past three years and during this current fiscal year to sustain project results. These results include the development of both social and financial capital and integration of services and resources. Following are just a few of the results related to our overall program sustainability.

I. Sustaining Results: Individuals and Families

Surveys and evaluation instruments gather data from families on what types of the programs they would like, where they would like to receive them, how they want to receive the information, and the content of programs. This information is incorporated in future program delivery. Examples: Adding Spanish language handouts to programs, posting resources on the web, providing information on recipes and snack preparation, providing book lists and seasonal activities, etc.

Evaluation data shows that parents are improving in their knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to child nutrition and literacy. They indicate high satisfaction with the programs they receive and indicate a high willingness to apply the information they have learned. Antidotal and follow-up information indicate they are in fact changing practices. Example: "Learning to compare and interpret food labels has made it easier for me to buy healthier foods for my family." And "Making time to read, sing, and make crafts really brought my entire family closer. Dad usually gets involved too! Through spending time to read, I have found that it is important that my children and I learn to communicate with each other by listening and asking questions. My children learn to talk to me when they want to express a thought and I learn to listen to them. Reading is not only a good tool in school and in life, but it is also and outstanding tool in building open communication in the family."

Program content delivery is always coupled with ways to effectively begin using the information. Families are directed to other resources to enhance or continue their learning. Example: Referrals are made to libraries and schools, other community events, HHS agencies and other medical professionals. Networking among families is encouraged. Example: Many families who have attended the 7 week *Off to a Good Start* series have developed lasting relationships with the other parents and established play groups for their children. Families who have attended previous workshops will often bring friends to the next workshop.

II. Sustaining Results: Institutional and Organizational

Nearly every activity or program associated with this project is evaluated formally or informally. Content, process, delivery, printed materials, etc. are constantly being revised, enhanced, modified, expanded or eliminated. Example: Ten infant and toddler workshops were added to the *Let's Read Together* series because of parents' requests for information for this age group. A nutrition workshop series for new parents was changed to a 'learner-centered' approach to better meet the needs of the families.

All of our programs are research-based and use proven delivery methods. Multiple face-to-face interactions that actively engage the learners are known to produce the greatest outcomes. Therefore, we incorporate these into our programming: Example: We offer a 7 series kindergarten readiness program, 1-2 hour parent workshops on literacy and nutrition that are hands-on and interactive. Knowing, however, that not all families can make time for these more intensive and beneficial deliveries, we are applying the latest knowledge on newsletters and other deliveries to parents. Examples: We offer a 15 series first year of life newsletter (*Parent Express*) to families that they receive monthly based on the age of their child. Other newsletters use proven layout and design strategies, such as the *Kid Food Newsletter*.

To assure that our programs are aligned with other agencies and First 5 goals, our staff attend a variety of community meetings and collaborations. Example: First 5 Commission meetings and events, Child Care Planning Council, ECE Workgroup, Placer Literacy Council, etc. This has resulted in our participation in numerous other community events, activities, and trainings and the sharing of our materials and resources.

Partnering and networking is essential and part of our routine work. Example: Through this project the Placer Nutrition Coalition was established. It has grown from four agencies (Head Start, WIC, CRC–Food Bank, and UCCE) to over two dozen agencies and individuals that meet 4-6 times a year. Growing from just being concerned about families with young children, the Coalition now covers all age groups and nutrition related issues. Through this communication and collaboration, we are able to best direct the financial resources of the Commission to audiences not

served or underserved by other agencies and programs. We have also been able to maximize resources through sharing of materials, connections, and information.

Building the capacity of other professionals and those that serve families 0-5 years has been a goal of this project. We have successfully trained hundreds of child care providers, health professionals, and other agency staff on content and delivery. Example: A recent nutrition in-service for professionals attracted over 40 individuals from public health, schools, hospitals, chiropractor, and media.

III. Sustaining Results: Community Integration

We have consistently been innovative and creative in our involvement with diverse elements of the community in delivering our programs. Example: We collaborated with PlacerGROWN and the Foothill Farmers' Market to increase families' consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. This supported the education by providing an incentive to try a new practice such as buying local fresh produce. We also participated in their Farm and Barn events. Another example is involving local grocery stores in a campaign to support healthy eating and family mealtime. We used point of purchase advertising on grocery carts to get parents' attention. Another example is working with the local movie theaters to show ads promoting family meal time.

Changing institutional and cultural practices isn't easy. We have tried to initiate small changes with these groups. Example: Promoting healthier snacks and meals at Commission meetings and events, as well as with other partners. Encouraging the offering of water rather than soda at community events and inserting physical activity breaks in meetings and trainings.

Sharing successes with the participants and the greater community is important to sustain change. We actively engage the media in our deliveries. Example: Over 50 different newspapers, TV and radio stations, and other media outlets are on our weekly mailing lists. We also provide news information through our website that has hundreds of pages of information on nutrition and literacy. Our staff have been on cable TV shows, radio spots, and interviewed by the news media. In fact, our office is now called on regularly by the Gold Country Media reporters to check sources for nutrition information or to get a local slant.